

***Voces de Muncie:***  
**Celebrating the Latino Presence**

An Creative Project (HONR 499)

By

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## Abstract

The goal of my Honor's College creative thesis is to introduce and celebrate the contributions made by the Latino population in Muncie, Indiana. By raising awareness of the Latino presence in this community, the project sheds light on challenges and achievements of a group that remains culturally segregated. With the power of storytelling and technology working hand in hand, the final product is a digital collection of stories and perspectives from different Latino members of the community, compiled on a free Apple and Google Store application (<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bsu-now/id1061212353?mt=8>). In order to make the app accessible to both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking audiences, the mobile app is available in both languages. In addition, users can experience multimedia elements such as mobile-only vertical videos that highlight cultural perspectives from Latino students at Ball State University. By sharing voices and issues that concern this minority group through social media and digital innovations, the project highlights how the Latino presence contributes to the diversity in Muncie.

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Most importantly, none of this could have happened without the community members who willingly shared their stories with me and rest of the audience, including Mrs. Irma Rodriguez, Mrs. Ernestina Escamilla, Dr. Ana de Brea, Lydia Villegas, and Erick Martinez. Their enthusiasm and passion for the Latino community made this project worthy of being published.

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## Process Analysis Statement

### **Project Rationale**

When I moved to Muncie to begin my undergraduate studies, the first thing I looked for was the presence of other Latinos in the community outside the campus. It was my first time being away from home; at my hometown Columbus, Indiana, I was used to being surrounded by a large Hispanic community. However, in Muncie, I did not meet any Hispanic residents. I wondered if one of the reasons of me not finding a Latino community was due to the small Hispanic population in Delaware County. Another reason could be the separation between on campus and off campus residents. Thus, before I graduate, I knew I wanted to work on a project that would seek and highlight the presence of Latinos in this community and bridge the gap between Muncie and Ball State University.

Since my high school years, I have been an active journalism student by holding leadership positions in both written and visual content areas. At Ball State University, through the Unified Media program in the Department of Journalism, I have had opportunities to work as a designer and graphics reporter for *The Daily News*, as well as an art director for *Ball Bearings Magazine*. My involvement in both student media publications has allowed me to distinguish myself as a one of the top designers in the department and develop polished materials for several immersive journalism classes. Nevertheless, I sensed something lacking from my experience at Ball State. Therefore, I searched for a project that would force me to connect with community members outside the university.

During the summer of my junior year, I interned for a design studio at the Gannett publications in Phoenix, Arizona. The following fall, I became the design intern for Vox Media, a multinational digital media company in the U.S., and the summer before my senior year, I interned for *Sports Illustrated* at Time Inc. in New York City. Having had amazing opportunities in well-known media companies, I returned to Muncie thinking about how I could make a meaningful contribution to this town with the skills I had acquired over the years.

While living in New York for nearly three months in the summer of 2016, I noticed the interaction among diverse community members. I found it interesting to see how individual communities go about their everyday activities in their respective neighborhoods, while often going unnoticed by the rest of society. However, the presence of these diverse communities is what makes New York City a culturally rich place. This experience inspired my creative project. Although Muncie is a small town in Indiana and cannot compete with the second most largest city in the world in terms of diversity, one similarity remains the same: there are groups of local residents from diverse backgrounds whose presence receive very little recognition. As a Latina, in particular, I wanted to be a channel for sharing Latino voice in Muncie community both on and off campus.

With my visual journalism background, I searched for ways to not only add diversity to my portfolio but also make the Latino presence better known. In addition, I wanted to challenge the skills I had acquired from my journalism classes and professional experiences. The majority of my experience was in the field of design and graphics, and I had limited exposure to writing profiles of individuals for a publication. With this creative project, called



*Voces de Muncie*, I would not only apply my design skills in community contexts, but also develop my interviewing and reporting skills. Thus, I decided to produce a digital collection of stories with a focus on the Latino community in Muncie. This is a collaborative project with the featured community members and Ball State University Latino students, compiled into a free Apple and Android mobile app available for everyone at no cost (see Appendix A for downloading instructions).

As an aspiring visual journalist, I understand the impact that storytelling can have on a community. According to the American Press Institute, the purpose of journalism is to provide people with the information they need to make the best possible decisions about their communities and societies. Equally important as informing the public, is giving people a chance to make their voices heard and to share their stories. Storytelling can not only challenge the audience to take action, but also play a major role in the development of the subject. Although everyone may have a compelling story to tell, not everyone takes the time to reflect on it. According to Rutledge, through stories, we share passions, sadness, hardships, and joys; we also share meaning and purpose. Those who choose to tell their stories explore not only their beliefs and emotions, but also their role in the community. Therefore, storytelling can be a vehicle to bring people together. For example, a story about an 89-year-old Mexican man from Chicago, who walked the streets of the “Little Village” selling frozen popsicles for a living, reached the hearts of many in September of 2016 (Rosenberg-Douglas, Katherine.) His story was shared via a social media post at first, but major media outlets quickly shared his story after strangers raised funds for his retirement. His GoFundMe campaign raised over \$260,000, and all because his story was told. The man who created the fundraiser campaign

said to the Chicago Tribune, "If it touches me, I should've known it touches everybody else who sees him." This is a case where the community was moved by this man's story and came together – locally and nationally – to take action and make an impact in his family. Many hard-working Latinos have compelling stories that remain hidden.

According to the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau, only 2.3 percent of the Muncie population is Latino or Hispanic. With a population of nearly 70,000, this means that there are 1,600 Latino people in the community, about 1,600 stories that probably go ignored. After a quick search on the Muncie Star Press website, I found only seven entries prior to September 2016, related to the keywords: *Latino* or *Hispanic*. With this search, four of the stories were national stories, two local events (one of them which took place at the Indiana State Museum), and one local story that actually talked about a Latino-related story. However, this article dates back to December 2014, when there was a peak in Hispanic enrollment at Ball State. The keyword *Hispanic* had 14 entries, but the results were either nationally-based stories or crime briefs. Such a lack of interest in Hispanic issues in a country with over 55 million Hispanics is alarming. There is more to the Latino community than occasional national media mentions and crime features. The stories of Latino members contribute to the diversity in Muncie, and many aspects of their contributions were discovered throughout the development of the project.

In addition to bringing cultural awareness, I saw the need to celebrate the Latino presence amidst the current political hostility in the country. Originally from Puebla, Mexico, I am an immigrant, and I have witnessed my parents' hard work and dedication in their respective jobs – corn fields, factories, and restaurants. Latinos make a contribution to this country, to this state, and to Muncie. The number of Latinos in the country has more than



doubled between 1980 and 2000 (Saenz). The increasing Hispanic presence has an impact on not only the demographics, but also food, entertainment, the media, and businesses.

Furthermore, businesses continue to benefit from the growth of the Latino population (Saenz). According to a Huffington Post article written by the National Council of La Raza in 2015, nearly 16 percent of the U.S. labor force is Latino; that's about 25 million workers. In addition to the labor force, Hispanic household also contribute in federal taxes, including individual and corporate income taxes. In 2013, Hispanic households paid about \$124 billion in federal taxes and nearly \$67 billion in state and local taxes (National Council of La Raza). Therefore, the economic and cultural contributions of Latinos should no longer go ignored, even in places like Muncie .

Thus, I chose to create a digital collection of stories from Latino members of the community and student leaders at Ball State. These profiles range from personal stories when they arrived to the United States to the struggles of following their American Dream.<sup>1</sup>

### **Bilingual Project**

As a Spanish heritage speaker, I am aware of the importance of maintaining one's heritage language. I wanted to apply and solidify my Spanish language skills to support the larger community. Furthermore, given that the majority of my interviews would be done in Spanish, as four out the six interviewees were more comfortable talking in Spanish, it made sense to do a bilingual project. More importantly, the stories should be accessible to both

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<sup>1</sup> This project was approved by the Office of Research Integrity. The office has confirmed that no further IRB permission is necessary to proceed with this project as this is a journalism-based approach.

English-speaking and Spanish-speaking community members. Thus, I decided to write the profiles in both languages. I wrote the stories in English first, as this has been my dominant language of academic and professional training. Then, taking into socio-cultural factors, I translated them into a Spanish version. In addition, I translated the navigational features of the app into Spanish.

### **Seeking Potential Interviewees**

In order to assure a diverse representation, I sought potential interviewees from different generations, occupations, social classes, and places of origin. However, as I identified possible people who would fit the particular criteria, I came across many challenges. First, given my lack of personal connection with community members, I was not able to find the people who wanted to be featured on this project. Given the statistics of nearly 1,600 Latino people in Delaware County, I assumed finding at least 10 people from various professions would be an easy task. However, I was wrong, and connecting with them took much more than only finding them. Second, some Hispanic residents showed little interest in the project, for they did not see an immediate tangible benefit for their lives and thus, were unwilling to invest their time. Third, time conflicts and busy work schedules from the interviewees altered my intended timeline for this project. I had to make several meeting arrangements with each individual. Finally, due to the recent hostile political climate in the country, many people feared sharing their stories.

My search for candidates began in early November, right after the election of President Donald Trump. The evident tension between the newly elected administration and Latino



community discouraged many local residents from gaining media attention. An article published by *Chicago Tribune* the day after the election results were announced summarizes what many Latinos probably felt that night. Berto Aguayo, a Chicago resident quoted in the article said, "I haven't gone to work yet, and my family is just silent. It's almost like the day after 9/11 happened. It's a tragedy to us. It's absurdity. It's fear" (Wong, Briscoe "Latinos"). Fear kept many Latinos to stay quiet, to remain hidden and unseen.

Upon my first attempt to contact several community members, I received many instant rejections. People would ask if this was a political stance or if their names would get published; others would simply not take my calls or respond to my emails despite my numerous attempts to contact them. After contacting various institutions including the Muncie Police Department, IU Ball Memorial Hospital, and schools with the goal of finding a wider range of professionals, the challenge of finding new voices remained. I quickly came to the conclusion that without a personal connection, there was no interest or willingness to be interviewed. It all came down to gaining their trust. Thus, unlike my previous journalism experiences, I spent a longer period of time developing relationships with the community members in order to make them feel comfortable enough to share the details of their personal lives. For example, my first interview with Irma Rodriguez lasted nearly an hour. Prior to interviewing Irma, we had contact through phone calls and text messaging, but this was only the beginning steps to form a relationship with my subject. We had two more meetings after that, including a photo shoot. I also needed to take into consideration her busy schedule as well as my own in order to make proper meeting arrangements. Similarly, I met with other interviewees more than once to get only small pieces of their life stories. It takes time for people to trust the interviewer, to open up,

and to be vulnerable about private moments with a stranger. Indeed, the interviewees shared richer stories during second or third meetings than the initial interview encounter.

After spending time developing relationships, I was only able to interview six members of the community, and finish with five distinct stories. While I interviewed six people, only five stories offered a unique take on diverse Latino experience and contributions.

### **Determining the Focus and Structure of the Interview**

The purpose of the interview process was to determine each individual's Latino experience and contribution. Initially, I prepared a set of questions (see Appendix B for the list of interview questions) for semi-structured interviews. However, as I have been trained in my journalism classes, I did not strictly follow the pre-planned format of the interview. Each subject has a unique perspective, and the questions only served as a guide to cover the main points of the project: their background, goals, and contributions after moving to the U.S.

### **Writing the Stories**

After meeting with the community members, I spent a significant amount of time transcribing their interviews to make sure I had accurate notes and information for the writing process. As a visual journalist, it is often tempting to skip the content part and jump straight to the "fun" part, which in my case was developing the app. However, as the design director at Mule Design, Mike Monteiro, states in his book *You're My Favorite Client*, "It's all about the content, people. Design is what holds it together. So before you drop a chunk of money and time on design, get some writers and content strategists" (pg. 11). While I am no professional



writer and much less a content strategist, Mike makes a good point. Regardless of the content one produces, people come to whatever it is you're creating for the content and choose to either leave and stay for the design. Therefore, I focused on the content first because "bad design can certainly bury good content, but you can't design a 'premium experience' and pour crap content into with any expectation of success" (Monteiro pg. 12). I spent a couple of weeks of intensive editing before I could begin working on the app design. The editing process entailed writing short abstracts for each story and determining the focus of each profile. Then, I worked on drafts of the English version, followed by drafts of the Spanish version, also reviewed by a native speaker of Spanish. Finally, I sought feedback and approval from each interviewee (see Appendix D for one sample story in the English version and Appendix E for the Spanish version). The subject profiles are described below:

1. **Irma Rodriguez:** Her story focuses on the struggles of learning a second language at an older age, while overcoming obstacles to reach new career goals. Her goals include acquiring her nail technician certification and opening her own nail salon.
2. **Ernestina Escamilla:** Ernestina shares the process of opening her family's Puerto Vallarta Mexican restaurants in Muncie.
3. **Ana de Brea:** Dr. de Brea discusses her passion for art and Latin American architecture, as well as the need to expose students to different cultures.
4. **Erick Rodriguez:** This Ball State student advocates for raising cultural awareness in the classroom.

5. **Lydia Villegas:** Ball State alumna talks about leaving her traditional household to pursue her own dreams, and encourages other Latinos to do as well.

### **Designing the App**

As I considered the platform for delivering this project, I debated between building a mobile website or a mobile app. While both of these two mediums look very similar at first-glance, each option offers different benefits, and I had to make a decision based on the needs and purpose of this project, as well as the budget considerations. A mobile website is similar to any website consisting of browser-based HTML pages house on the Internet (HSW Solutions). Apps are applications that anyone can download and install on their mobile devices, rather than being rendered within a browser. Users can either access apps through the Apple's App Store or Android Market, depending on which device they own. Therefore, when it came to deciding between building an app or mobile website, I had to consider the costs of both of these two approaches. As an employee at the Ball State Digital Publishing Studio (DPS), I am familiar with the process of building and publishing apps. Our studio has a contract with Adobe, which is the tool we use to publish our apps such as Ball State Athletics and BSU NOW. These two apps house individual projects. In this case, *Voces de Muncie* lives in the BSU NOW app, along with other immersive projects. Thus, creating a mobile app would not only be faster, but also cost-free. On the contrary, building a mobile website would require a budget for purchasing hosting sites, a public domain, website theme, as well as Wordpress membership. While, ideally this would have been the better approach for reaching a larger audience, it did not match the resources we had available for this project.



After most of the editing was coming to an end, I was finally able to focus on the app development. The app creation part of this project was the opportunity to bring together all my acquired skills: writing, design thinking process, conceptualization, user experience, and of course, visual aesthetics.

After working nearly three years at the Ball State Publishing Studio and interning with Vox Media Product team, I was able to implement the same design process we use when creating a new product. The first step to any good design is always conceptualizing the content, sketching, prototyping and wireframing, designing, and finally adding functionality to the product. Some designers may choose to skip the prototyping and sketching steps, and go straight to designing in order to “save some time,” but at the end, it can cost them more time to make revisions. I did not want to go through that because “while skipping prototyping might save some time during design, that surplus can be lost many times over in development” (Cao “Prototypes”). Prior to beginning the development of the app, I had an idea in my head as to how it would function and be organized. Nevertheless, I sketched out the blueprint of the app so I could get a more defined strategy of the whole project. Sketching and wireframing the app allowed me to focus on the experience first before thinking of the visuals and aesthetic of the project. Once I was satisfied with the user experience, which refers to the quality of the user’s interaction with and perceptions of a product flow (usability.gov), I proceeded with the visual designing and branding of the app (see Appendix C for profile example).

As a designer, I spend much time searching for inspiration and analysing different products for takeaways and a list of do’s and don’t’s. I created a simple, yet vibrant style for the

app. The app needed to be simple enough to navigate for my target audience, including the Latino members profiled who were older and with limited technological skills. In order to create a user-friendly experience, I had to do some usability testing with potential users. Then, I made several adjustments, including larger menu icons and typography. I further adjusted the size of several of the app elements that would yield a better experience to my intended app users. My goal was to make this app as visually appealing as possible, as well as user friendly. As a result, the app has “edgy” features in design elements, as well as simplicity, which is a major design trend, according to The Next Web. Another design element I implemented was long scrolling. As the society in general is transferring from a print to a digital world, it is essential to keep up with technology trends even in design. The small screens of mobile devices limit how much information can “fit above the fold,” a common phrase referencing print newspapers (The Next Web). Knowing this, I was forced to choose between scrolling or sacrificing elements in order to make everything fit in the screen; I chose scrolling. The *Voces de Muncie* app is primarily composed by long scrolling pages, which offers unique opportunities for storytelling that page-by-page navigation does not match (The Next Web). In addition, I also paid a particular attention to vertical video. As Digital Trends states, vertical is the new horizontal. This change in video and image orientation resulted from the shift toward mobile-first media production. Since 89 percent of mobile users in the U.S. uses their phones to access the news, we are constantly viewing vertical content on our mobile screens (Digital Trends). Since I intended to create a mobile-only app, I could not ignore this trend. After choosing to include a student section, where Ball State students could share their voice and contributions, I created and edited vertical videos. According to a 2015 Microsoft Corp study,



the attention span of a human is only eight seconds, one second less than a goldfish (McSpadden "Science"). Taking this fact into consideration, I knew that people would less likely watch video clips longer than 10 seconds. Even big social media apps like Snapchat and Instagram try to adapt to this reality, and their "stories" feature allows for pictures and videos to last no longer than 10-15 seconds. Thus, I condensed most of the student interviews to approximately 10 seconds. Combining the scrolling, vertical, and 10-second video strategies, I was able to highlight the key points in each video interview (see Appendix F for stages of the design process).

After much detail and testing that went into the creation of the app, I finally moved on to create the Spanish version. I wanted my readers to be able to understand their own stories, so creating a Spanish version was not optional. Both apps are identical, except for the language option. Having access to "BSU Now," a Ball State-owned Adobe app that hosts immersive projects and other apps related to the campus, publishing it was not a hurdle. The app will be live starting May 1st and accessible for anyone without any cost.

Initially, I had hoped to share the product with a wider audience by making a community presentation that would bring a diverse group of community members together; however, such plans for project dissemination would require another semester worth of work and additional resources. Despite these obstacles, the project evolved into something more than I had imagined. I was given the opportunity to make connections with active community members, while creating creating a platform of sharing the Latino voice. The interviewees acknowledge the need for Latinos to support each other in Muncie. Erick Martinez states in his

profile that, "We're different. We're a spectrum. Sometimes people would rather look the other way, but we are in need of programs like 'Su Casa' to help Latinos start off."

### **Launching App and Current Events**

The aim of the project is to shed light on the Latino contributions in small towns like Muncie. This app was launched on May 1st, 2017. On Monday, May 1st, the immigrant community and supporting organizations planned a national "Day Without Immigrant." protest. This event encourages immigrants and allies to strike from work, school, and contributing in any way to their local economy by boycotting shopping or spending money in any form. This movement was initiated by Movimiento Cosecha, a nonviolent movement that works to promote "dignity and respect for million undocumented people in this country" (Movimiento Cosecha). On this day, Movimiento Cosecha intends to show the impact of Latino and immigrant contributions to the U.S. in the participants' respective cities. Movimiento Cosecha organizers plan future strikes and May 1st "is just the beginning" ("May 1st: A Day Without Immigrants"). As an immigrant and supporter of this movement, I plan to promote the *Voces de Muncie* app via social media platforms. Each day of the week, starting on May 1st, will feature a community member or student profile. This promotional approach is not only timely, but also a contribution to this national strike (see Appendix G for promotional materials).

### **Final Reflections**

Overall, the positive outcomes of the project outweigh the challenges that were experienced along the way. The creation of the app was the cherry on top, as the connection



with the community was the most rewarding outcome. Building relationships with community members was one of my personal goals prior to the execution of this project. Fortunately, I was not only able to meet new people, but also connect with them at a personal level. It is safe to say that I finally found the community I had very much longed for at the beginning of my college career here in Muncie. Specifically, I got the opportunity to network with professionals on campus, like Dr. de Brea, learn from her as a talented writer, and even discuss a possible future participation in her study abroad program. In addition, I established a relationship with Mrs. Rodriguez, as we now communicate frequently regarding planning community events together via text messaging. Lastly, the Escamilla family, owners of the three Puerto Vallarta restaurants, are now inspired to bring the community together through their restaurant business, either by hosting events like "Margarita Day" or Cinco de Mayo celebrations. The interviewees shared their concern for the lack of Latino presence in the community, and this project initiated much needed dialogue among each other.

Another important outcome of this project was the creation of another experimental publication designed specifically for the Latino audience on campus called "MBRACE." A journalism immersive course, directed by the graphics coordinator Ryan Sparrow, offered students the opportunity to create a niche publication. A group of students and I took this opportunity to create "MBRACE," which is a startup publication on campus that targets Latino students on and off campus with cultural topics such as food and drinks, music, entertainment, and current events. There is more to the Latino community than statistics, and this publication demonstrates that. Working closely with a group of classmates, we strive to connect to the Latino audience in ways that makes them feel involved, important, and understood.

Nonetheless, *Voces de Muncie* will continue to evolve in various forms through this publication and social media platforms in the future. This project will not end with the submission of this essay. As I plan to pursue my Master's in the Emerging Media and Design Development program, I will continue to live in Muncie for at least two more years. I hope to expand this project as part of my graduate thesis. There are still many more stories to be heard from the Latino community -- stories of personal struggles, accomplishments, honors, dreams, and contributions. Stories of Latino experience in Muncie deserve the chance to be shared, because they are all worthy of being acknowledged.

To conclude, through *Voces de Muncie* I had the privilege of meeting amazing community members, initiating a Latino-targeted student media publication, and giving the Latino community the attention it deserves. Also, I discovered this was something I am passionate about. Joining my journalism skills and passion for the immigrant community, I now see myself expanding this type of work in the future. In fact, hearing the stories of these community members has led me to work for an immigration firm in Indianapolis, Broyles, Kight & Ricafort, P.C. There, I will get the opportunity to interview people applying for visas and other documents and writing their personal statements, while hearing their stories. More than a graduation and Honors College requirement, *Voces de Muncie* is what this community needs amidst the current political hostility. All community members need to feel welcomed; this is their home. This is seen in the national level as well. Jose Antonio Vargas is the founder and CEO of Define American, a non-profit media and culture organization that starts conversations about immigration in America. In June 2011, he wrote and published an essay for *The New York Times Magazine*, where he revealed his life as an undocumented immigrant



(JoseAntonioVargas). In an interview with GQ Magazine he said, "I'm not a minority: I'm a majority of one. We all are. To call someone a minority, you give them baggage, of not being full, or not being seen as full. All of us need to be seen as full human beings" (Tso, Phoenix). Indeed, everyone in this community needs to be seen as *full* human beings. That was the purpose of *Voces de Muncie*. Latinos are here; they have a voice, a story. Muncie needs to acknowledge them.

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## Appendix A

### **Downloading Instructions:**

*Ideal mobile device: iPhone 6/6s, but a range of versions work as well*

*Step 1: Open the Apple App Store or Android's Google Play Store.*

*Step 2 Search for "BSU Now" on the search bar*

*Step 3: Download "BSU Now" app*

*Step 4: Open "Voces de Muncie" project on the app's Home page*

*Step 5: Navigate through the project and enjoy!*

### **App download link for iPhone users:**

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bsu-now/id1061212353?mt=8>

### **App download link for Android users:**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.bsu.bsunow&hl=en>



## Appendix B

### Interview Questions:

Questions were initially prepared in Spanish, then translated if needed.

#### General

1. ¿Qué edad tenía cuando se mudó a los Estados Unidos? *How old were you when you moved to the United States?*
2. ¿Cuál fue la razón por la cual se mudó? *What was the reason why you moved?*
3. ¿Cuál fue su primera impresión al llegar a este país? *What was your first impression when you first came to this country?*
4. ¿Cuáles fueron algunos retos a los que se enfrentó al llegar a este país? *What were some of the challenges you faced when you came here?*
5. ¿Cómo los sobrepasó? *How did you overcome them?*
6. ¿Cuál es su profesión? *What is your current occupation?*

#### Comunidad

1. ¿Qué papel tiene usted en la comunidad? *What role do you play in the community?*
2. En su opinión, ¿qué aportan los latinos a nuestra comunidad? *In your opinion, how do Latinos contribute to our community?*
3. ¿Cuáles son sus perspectivas sobre la comunidad latina en esta ciudad? *What is your perspective about the Latino community in this city?*
4. ¿Piensa que la comunidad latina es representada lo suficiente? *Do you think the Latino community is represented enough?*

5. ¿Qué le gustaría que la comunidad supiera de los latinos? *What would you like the community to know about Latinos?*
6. ¿Cómo comunica sus contribuciones, retos, o preocupaciones al resto de la comunidad? *How do you communicate your contributions, challenges and concerns to the rest of the community?*

### **Diversidad**

1. ¿Qué hace usted para conservar su cultura en medio de una comunidad con poca diversidad? *What do you do to keep your culture in a community with very little diversity?*
2. ¿Es difícil seguir tradiciones y asimilarse al mismo tiempo? ¿Por ejemplo? *Is it difficult to follow your traditions and assimilate at the same time? For example?*
3. Si tiene hijos, ¿cómo piensa usted que la asimilación afecte sus raíces? *If you have children, how do you think assimilation affects their roots?*
4. ¿Qué mensaje quiere mandar a toda la comunidad? *What message do you want to send to the community in general?*



## Appendix C

### Irma's profile:

Screenshot #1



# *The American Dream*

## *New challenges*

**I** Irma came to the United States when she was 32 years old, after her soon-to-be husband moved here for a job offer. Originally from Mexico, Irma and her husband, Antonio did not leave in search of the American Dream. As she puts it, this opportunity just developed on its own. However, like any new immigrant, she faced language barriers along the way.

"I'm a very talkative person," she said. "So, I felt trapped within myself. But, life's obstacles make you grow in life, only if you want to."

And this was an obstacle she was willing to

SCROLL DOWN FOR MORE

Screenshot #2



**"THIS PIECE OF PAPER  
COST ME A LOT. NOT  
FINANCIALLY. IT WAS  
A LOT OF EFFORT."**

"This piece of paper (her certificate) cost me a lot," She said. "Not financially. It was a lot of effort."

She now has her own nail salón, or her creative corner, as she calls it, which her husband built for her.



SCROLL DOWN FOR MORE

## Appendix D

### "The American Dream"

Profile: Irma Rodriguez

#### English Version

##### **New challenges**

Irma came to the United States when she was 32 years old, after her soon-to-be husband moved here for a job offer. Originally from Mexico, Irma and her husband, Antonio did not leave in search of the American Dream. As she puts it, this opportunity just developed on its own. However, like any new immigrant, she faced language barriers along the way.

"I'm a very talkative person," she said. "So, I felt trapped within myself. Life's obstacles make you grow in life, but only if you want to."

And this was an obstacle she was willing to overcome. The realization that she needed to learn English came when she experienced a conflict at her first job. In a primarily white factory, she was one out of three Hispanic women working there.

One day at work, a woman blamed her for a production problem they had, and Irma was not able to stand up for herself. The impotence of not being able to defend herself marked an important milestone in her life.

"I promised myself that I wouldn't depend on anyone anymore," Irma said. "Either by signs or I don't know what, I was going to learn to speak for myself."

And she did.

### **Learning English**

Tired of people misinterpreting her and not being able to get adequate information when needed, she began to take English classes twice a week. The company she was working for at that time arranged for her to take English classes for a year.

However, she was surprised when she was placed into a classroom with people with disabilities.

"Every day I would question why I was there. My teacher explained to me that I was there because I didn't speak English, and I couldn't interact with people," She said. "My self-esteem was pretty low."

But she was determined to learn English and continued to attend class. Irma was eventually moved into a higher level classroom. She would motivate other non-English speakers to take those classes with her.



"I didn't want them to go through what I did."

### **Reaching new goals**

Irma was never accustomed to staying home. While she was pregnant with her third son, Howard, she worked at a Chinese restaurant until a day before she gave birth.

She would often feel homesick, and work as a distraction for her. After taking the initiative to learn English, she had a new goal in mind to become a certified nail technician.

Despite the language barrier, she was determined to get her certification. She registered for a nail course at a local school. But it was not easy.

"One day, I got home crying. I wanted to quit," Irma said. "But I said, 'I'm going to give it all I got.'"

Surrounded by younger students in the class, Irma and an older Vietnamese student served as an inspiration for them by demonstrating their persistence and encouraging others. They would often ask her if she really wanted to be there, and she did. She enjoyed new challenges and being there was a dream of hers. Irma's instructor gave her the option to use a Spanish textbook, but she decided to use the English one instead.

"If I were going to work here, I might as well take the course in English," she said. After studying for two months, she passed her state exam.

"This piece of paper (her certificate) cost me a lot," She said. "Not financially. It was a lot of effort."

Aside from her full-time job, she also has her own nail salón, or her creative corner, as she calls it, which her husband built for her.

### **Keeping her traditions alive**

Even though she is far away from her country of origin, she keeps traditions alive.

When her children were younger, she participated in "International Day" at their schools. She would bring traditional Mexican food, objects, and even show typical dances.

One of her biggest traditions is celebrating el Día de La Virgen de Guadalupe, a Catholic holiday that commemorates the life of the Virgin Mary on December 12.

Irma, her husband, and a group of church members took the initiative at their local church, St. Lawrence Catholic Church, to celebrate this day.

They wore traditional dresses, usually for Aztec-like performances in honor of Virgen Mary.

"It was very beautiful. A lot of people came, even from Anderson."

After attending that church for almost 20 years, this was one of their first traditional celebrations they have held. The church's new priest was very enthusiastic about bringing new Latino people to their church, according to Irma. The new priest even brought an image of Virgin Mary to church as a way to attract more Hispanic people.

"You can make a difference if you want to, and the new priest is doing a lot of things to motivate the Hispanic community."

One of those things is holding Mass in Spanish once a month.

### **"Sí, se puede"**

Though an avid protector of her roots, she still encourages people to learn the language and adapt to new cultures. She finds inspiration in her son's decision to join the airforce.

"Wanting to do better is what marks the difference in our community."

Irma continues to work and to run her nail salon. She's always seeking new opportunities to learn and stay up to date on nail art. She believes the will to do better is what differentiates the Latino community.



"I don't just clean feet," She said. "If you love what you do, then it becomes an art. I'm Irma and I want to be Irma my whole life."

**Message to the Muncie community**

I am very happy to belong to the Muncie community, and I felt welcome from the beginning. I hope that other immigrants will continue to have the same experience. Muncie is a beautiful place with lots of history, and if I were to begin again, I would still return to Muncie. The people I have known over the past 20 years, (have given her) different experiences, some good, some bad, but that is what makes you appreciate every moment in this community.

**For students:** Prepare yourselves. You need to be mentally and physically prepared.

Everything you do (referring to school) is to have a better life. If you struggled to get where you are, don't let your future generations also struggle.

**Non-English speakers:** We're in the United States, and we need to learn English. It doesn't matter if you didn't get an education; it's important to learn the language. Don't ever feel inferior to others. Being a "Mexican" does not make you any less, so do not label yourself as "just a Mexican."

## Appendix E

### "The American Dream"

Profile: Irma Rodriguez

### Spanish Version

#### **Nuevos retos**

Irma llegó a los Estados Unidos a la edad de 32 años, un poco después de que su prometido se mudó por razones de trabajo. Originalmente de México, Irma y su esposo no se mudaron para buscar el Sueño Americano. Según ella, la oportunidad de vivir una vida mejor se fue desarrollando sola. Sin embargo, como muchos inmigrantes, ella se enfrentó con el gran reto de no hablar el idioma.

"Yo soy una persona a quien le gusta hablar mucho," ella dijo. "Entonces, me sentí atrapada en mí misma. Pero los tropiezos que pasan en la vida te ayudan a crecer pero sólo cuando quieres."

Pero ella estaba dispuesta a sobrepasar este tropiezo en su vida. Se dio cuenta de su necesidad de hablar inglés cuando tuvo un conflicto en su primer trabajo. En una fábrica donde la mayoría de empleados era gente blanca, solamente trabajaban tres mujeres de origen latino.

Un día en el trabajo, una mujer la culpó por un problema de producción, e Irma se sintió impotente no poder defenderse a sí misma. Esa impotencia marcó un acontecimiento importante en su vida.

“Me prometí a mí misma que jamás iba a volver a pedir ayuda,” ella dijo. “Dije que iba a tratar de hablar por mí misma, a señas, no sé cómo, pero yo sola iba a hablar.”

Y así fue.

### **Aprender una nueva lengua**

Cansada de que la gente malinterpretara sus intenciones y le comunicaran información incorrecta a su esposo, empezó a tomar clases de inglés dos veces por semana. La empresa donde trabajaba en aquel entonces le facilitó sus clases de inglés durante un año.

Sin embargo, al tomar esas clases ella se sorprendió cuando la colocaron en un salón con personas con discapacidades.

“Todos los días yo me preguntaba por qué estaba ahí. Mi maestra me explicó que estaba ahí porque no hablaba inglés, entonces no podía interactuar con los demás,” ella dijo. “Mi autoestima se calló por los suelos.”



Pero Irma estaba determinada a aprender inglés y continuó asistiendo a sus clases.

Eventualmente, la transfirieron a otro salón de un nivel más alto. Ella no solamente asistía a sus clases, sino también animaba a otros latinos a tomar clases con ella.

“Yo no quería que les pasara lo que me pasó a mí.”

### **Alcanzar nuevas metas**

Irma nunca ha estado acostumbrada a quedarse en casa. Aún durante su embarazo con su tercer hijo, Howard, ella trabajó en un restaurante chino hasta el día antes de dar a luz.

Ella cuenta que extrañaba a su familia (en México), entonces el trabajo fue su distracción. Pero después de dar a luz y aprender el idioma, ella tenía otra meta en mente: llegar a ser una técnica de uñas certificada.

A pesar de la barrera del idioma, tenía la determinación de adquirir su certificación. Fue entonces que se registró para tomar clases en una escuela local.

“Un día, llegué a mi casa llorando y quería quitear,” Irma dijo. “Pero dije, ‘no, le voy a echar ganas, y darle todo lo que tengo.’”

Rodeada de estudiantes más jóvenes en la clase, Irma y una estudiante mayor de origen vietnamita, sirvieron de inspiración para ellos, demostrando su persistencia y al mismo tiempo

alentando a otros. A menudo le preguntaban si realmente quería estar allí, y ella de hecho sí quería estar ahí. Ella disfrutaba de nuevos desafíos y estar allí era un sueño suyo. La instructora de Irma le dio la opción de usar un libro de texto en español, pero Irma decidió usar el material en inglés.

“Si iba a trabajar ahí, tenía que saber el material en inglés”, ella dijo. Después de estudiar durante dos meses para su prueba del estado, finalmente la pasó.

“Ese papel [su certificado] me costó mucho,” dijo. “No económicamente, sino me costó mucho esfuerzo.”

Ahora, trabaja en su propio salón de uñas, el cual su esposo construyó poco a poco. Ella lo llama su “rincón creativo”.

### **Mantener sus tradiciones**

Aunque está lejos de su país de origen, Irma mantiene sus tradiciones vivas.

Cuando sus hijos eran menores, ella participaba en el “Día Internacional” en sus escuelas. Dice que llevaba comida, artesanías, y hasta bailes tradicionales.

Una de sus grandes tradiciones es celebrar el Día de La Virgen de Guadalupe, una tradición de origen católico que conmemora a la Virgen María el 12 de diciembre.

De hecho, Irma, su esposo, y un grupo de personas en su iglesia de St. Lawrence tomaron la iniciativa para celebrar ese día el año pasado.

Se pusieron vestidos tradicionales e hicieron bailes de raíz azteca en honor a la Virgen.

“Se puso muy bonito. Vino mucha gente, hasta de Anderson.”

Después de asistir a la misma iglesia por 20 años, ésta es una de las primeras celebraciones mexicanas que han tenido. Pues, el nuevo cura está entusiasmado de atraer a la comunidad latina a la iglesia, según Irma. Un día el nuevo padre llevó una imagen de la Virgen María a la iglesia para que la gente se sintiera bienvenida.

“Si tú quieres, tú puedes hacer la diferencia y el nuevo padre está haciendo muchas cosas para motivar a la comunidad hispana.”

Una de esas es empezar misa en español mensualmente.

### **“Échenle ganas”**

Aunque es una gran protectora de sus raíces, Irma anima a la gente a aprender el idioma y adaptarse a nuevas culturas.



“Querer mejorarse es lo que marca la diferencia en nuestra comunidad.”

Irma continúa trabajando y atendiendo en su salón de uñas. Siempre busca nuevas oportunidades para aprender y mantenerse al día con la moda del arte de las uñas.

Para Irma, esto es más que un simple pasatiempo.

“No solamente lavo los pies,” dijo. “Si amas lo que haces, entonces es arte. Yo lo veo como arte. Yo soy Irma y quiero ser Irma toda mi vida.”

### **Mensaje para la comunidad**

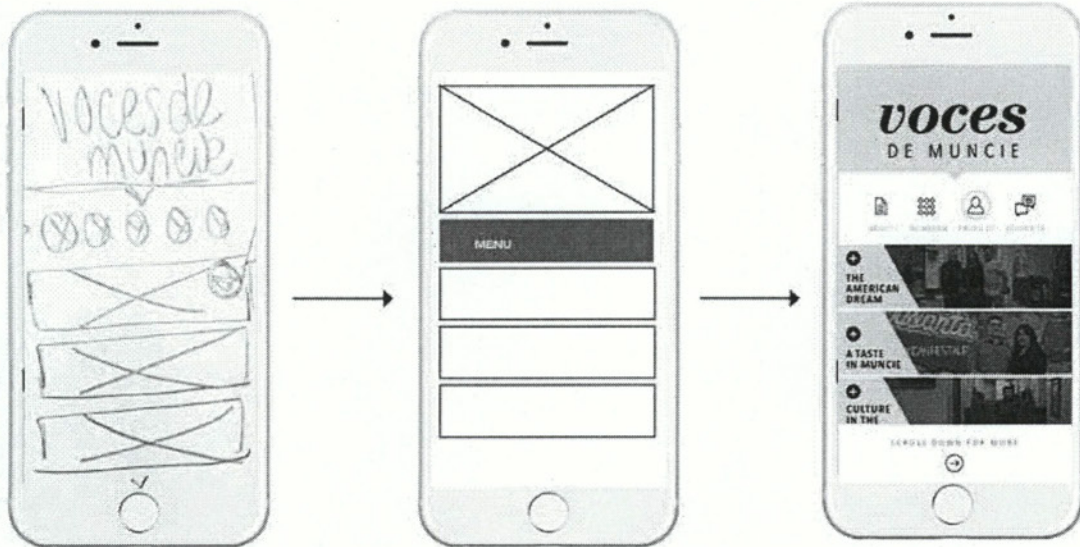
Estoy muy contenta de pertenecer a la comunidad de Muncie, y me sentí bienvenida desde el principio. Espero que otros inmigrantes sigan teniendo la misma experiencia. Muncie es un lugar hermoso con mucha historia y si volviera a regresar, me gustaría llegar a Muncie otra vez. Las personas que en estos 20 años he conocido, con diferentes experiencias, buenas y malas, son las que te hacen valorar cada momento vivido en esta comunidad.

**Para los estudiantes:** Prepárense. Necesitan estar preparados mentalmente y físicamente. Que todo lo que hagan, sea para tener una vida mejor. Solo porque ustedes sufrieron no significa que las futuras generaciones tengan que sufrir también.

**Para los que no hablan inglés:** Estamos en Estados Unidos y hay que aprender inglés. No importa si no tuviste una educación; es importante aprender la lengua. Y que jamás te sientas inferior a los demás. Ser “mexicano” no te hace menos que otros. No se etiqueten como “simples mexicanos.”

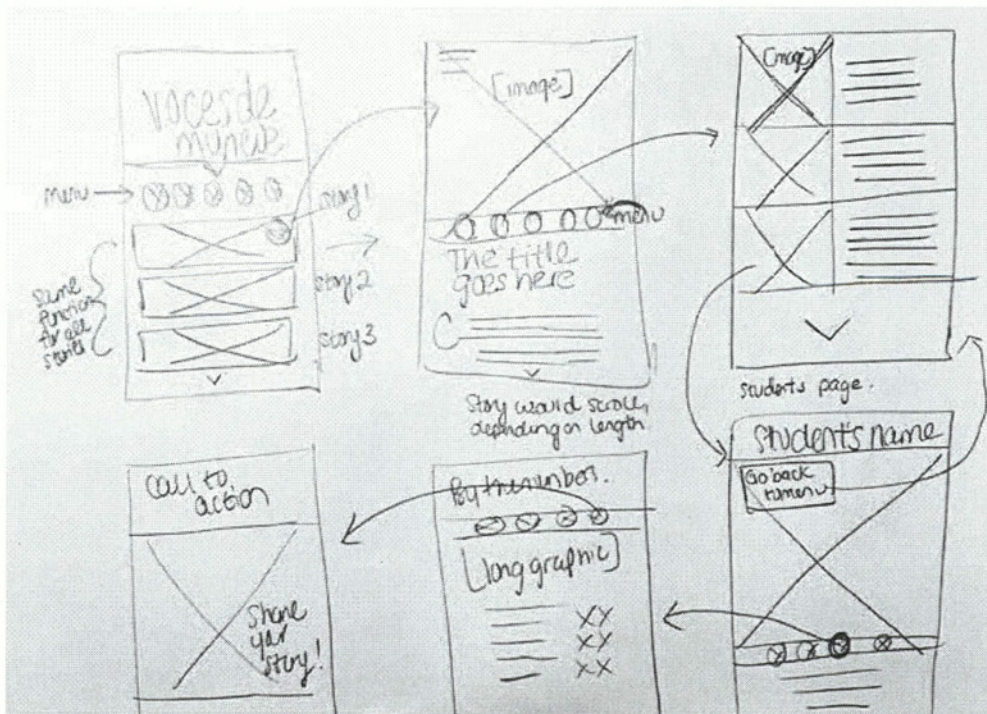
## Appendix F

### Design Process



#### Sketching:

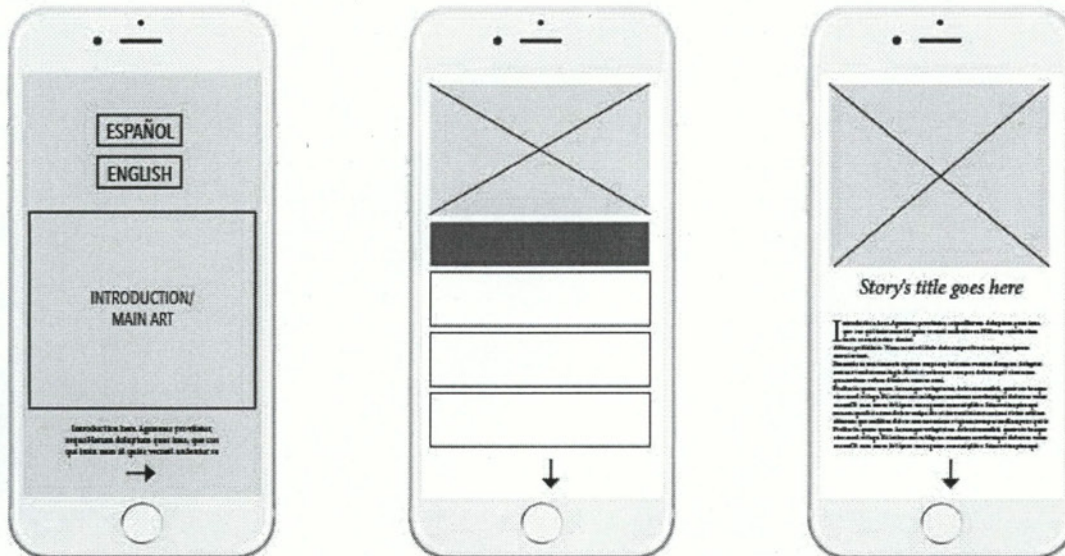
Prior to beginning any design of the app, I had to sketch the flow of the different sections. Focusing on only the flow of the app and function, improves the experience of the user. Below is an initial sketch of the app wireframe.





### Wireframing:

After narrowing down the flow of the app, I begin to bring those elements into Adobe InDesign, a design tool used to design static and interactive projects. This step is often combined with the design process, therefore, the majority of the work overlaps. For example, wireframing splash page, of the app only required placing a large box and adding buttons. As a result, I went ahead and designed that first. The rest of the pages were partially wireframed.

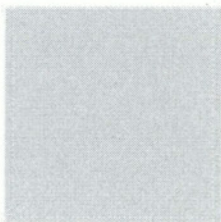


### Design/Style:

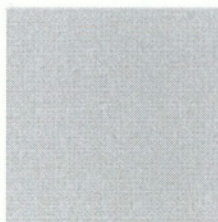
Before designing the app, it is necessary to establish feel and look of the overall design. Therefore, I had to select a color palette, typography style, image treatment and navigation icons.

### Colors:

In the attempt to keep the design as minimalistic as possible, I chose a vibrant color and simple navigation.



Primary color  
#FEE81B



Secondary color  
#8B998F



Tertiary color  
#000000

### Video:

Given that this is a mobile app, the student videos are broken down into different vertical video segments.



### App design:

After finalizing the design and style, the rest was an easier process.





### Typograhpy:

The choice of the typefaces I used are simple, serif and san serif fonts.

## *Headline*

→ The dominat font used for headlines throughout the app profiles.

## HEADERS

→ Used for section headers: profiles, students, numbers, etc.

## Body copy font

→ Used for body copy for large text used throughout the app.

## APP INSTRUCTIONS

→ Used to direct the user whether to scroll, move from page to page, or tap on certain interactive elements.

### Imagery:

Icons are simple outline vector illustrations used to indicate the main focus for each section.



ABOUT



NUMBERS



PROFILES



STUDENTS

### Photography:

Black and white photography, as well as color, is used for all profiles. The grayscale tones serve as a good contrast with the vibrant yellow.



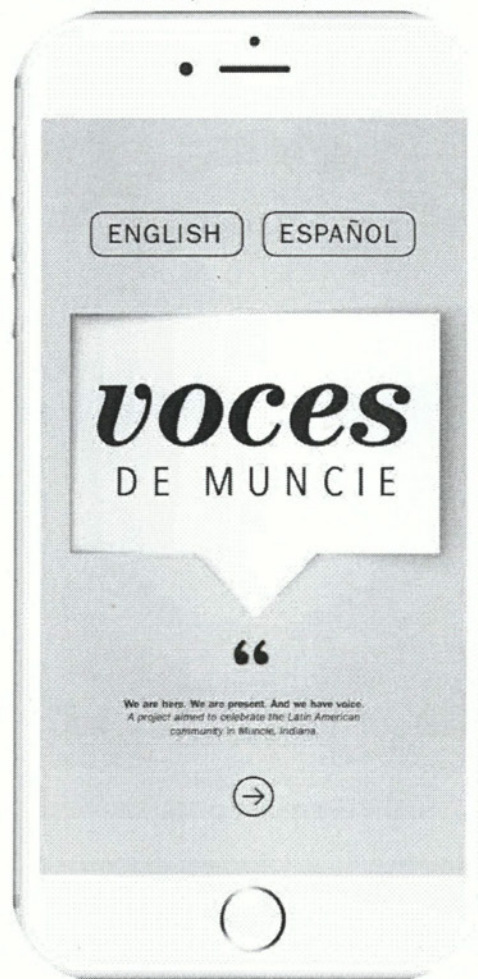


## Appendix G

### Promotional: Print Handouts

# VOCES DE MUNCIE:

We are here. We are present. And we have voice.  
*A project aimed to celebrate the Latin American  
community in Muncie, Indiana.*



FREE APP FOR YOUR APPLE OR  
ANDROID PHONES **COMING SOON!**

Facebook and Instagram Examples:

